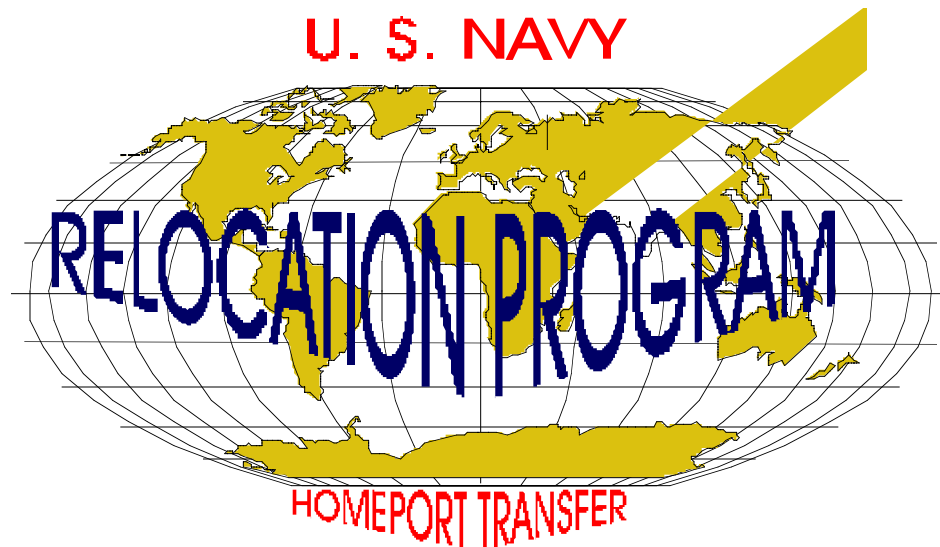


# COMMAND HOMEPORT TRANSFER KIT

## *ADVANCE TEAM GUIDE*



AT

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*"...We went from the lowest retention rate in the Western Pacific to the winner of the CINCPACFLT Golden Anchor Award for Best Retention Programs. A large portion of this, I think, was due to the ability of our communications and the effort we put into the homeport shift."*

Captain David McKinley, USN  
USS REEVES

## PREFACE

*The U.S. Navy has been involved in homeport transfer activities since its inception. The complexity of the activities has increased over the years due not only to the changing size of the Navy but also to the relatively recent and dramatic increase in the number of crew members who have family responsibilities.*

*The demise of the U.S.S.R. as a superpower in the late 1980s has resulted in a major realignment of U.S. military forces. The impact of this realignment became most evident during the 1990s. No doubt shifting geopolitical pressures will continue into the next century and the Navy will need to continue to shift and realign its forces accordingly.*

*This kit is designed to assist Commands involved in homeport transfer situations. It is also applicable to similar activities such as precommissionings, decommissionings, and shipyard overhauls. In addition to the guidance provided by a Relocation and Homeport Transfer Working Group, the information provided in this kit is based upon previous research of homeport transfers and on interviews at the waterfront with management personnel, including ship Commanding Officers, as well as with crew and family members who have participated in homeport transfers. As such, it is a compilation of the current wisdom about factors promoting and inhibiting a smooth transfer.*

*In August 1993, work to develop this kit was begun. With feedback from Commands such as yours, this kit will be periodically updated to keep it in line with the realistic and changing needs of Commands experiencing homeport transfers.*

*Although written primarily for afloat commands, this kit is applicable to the aviation community and even for shore commands undergoing permanent relocation.*

*This kit is not a requirement; however it does provide useful guidelines and tools for the command to identify and utilize diverse resources throughout the Navy.*

*This guide will address these issues:*

- ∞ **SECTION I - THE PROGRAM FOCUS** establishes the basic issues relating to the subject of homeport changes.
- ∞ **SECTION II - OVERVIEW OF THE ADVANCE TEAM**
- ∞ **SECTION III - SUGGESTED HOMEPORT TRANSFER ACTIVITIES** outlines a model set of recommended personnel assignments and events normally associated with homeport transfers. These activities are presented in the context of roles and responsibilities of the Advance Team.

*Included are appendixes to this guide:*

- ∞ **APPENDIX A.** Briefing charts used by PERS-409 to present major issues associated with homeport transfers.
- ∞ **APPENDIX B. USS REEVES EXPERIENCE** outlines the experience of the USS REEVES, which successfully completed a homeport transfer and the lessons learned as viewed by the CO.
- ∞ **APPENDIX C.** Kit Assessment Form to provide feedback to the Commanding Officer on the usefulness of this Homeport Transfer Kit.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Early in 1993, the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS), now Naval Personnel Command (NPC), specifically PERS-662, responded to a need for support to commands undergoing homeport changes. In response to this need, PERS-662 and PERS-409 began to conceptualize a set of structured support services and aids. These materials were to be based on past research and on input from organizations traditionally tasked with assisting commands during similar operational functions such as deployment and relocation. A Working Group was formed in March 1993 to develop the design requirements for materials to support Commands involved in homeport transfers. Major contributors and advisors to the design and development of this kit included the following personnel:

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### SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- ∞ **CAPT David McKinley and Mrs. Paula McKinley** for their consultation and description of the USS REEVES homeport transfer experience.

**SUCCESS OF THE  
HOMEPORT TRANSFER PROCESS  
DEPENDS ON  
THE CO's COMMITMENT  
AND LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT  
THE COMMAND**

## **SECTION I - PROGRAM FOCUS**

A successful homeport transfer has a direct impact on the morale of the crew and therefore on performance, retention, the rate of incidents, and operational readiness. In particular, the experience of both crew and family members during the transfer process often determines their attitudes for the rest of their tour of duty. It is important to ensure that the transfer minimize the disruption to their lives.

The success or failure of the transfer process with regard to overall adjustment by crew and dependents will depend largely on the Commanding Officer's commitment and approach to the provision of support services. These include careful planning; the provision of comprehensive, up-to-date information on the receiving homeport; and the facilitation of logistical arrangements throughout the entire process of predeparture, in transit, arrival, and the postarrival adjustment period. If the command's new homeport is overseas, special attention must be given to screening to determine suitability for overseas assignment and the provision of services to help in a positive and realistic orientation to the culture of the new homeport.

The provision of support services is essentially a leadership task, with the CO, other senior officers, and senior enlisted personnel as the first-line supervisors. Although they delegate responsibility to others, their leadership in facilitating the process is critical. The personnel-related tasks require careful planning, close monitoring, rapid action to resolve potential or actual problems, and ongoing support for those assigned responsibility for support services.

This kit focuses on the obvious and practical issues of planning, coordinating, and providing support to crew and family members. There are also issues that contribute to the resistance by some individuals or families about homeport transfers. Many of these issues are known and traditional factors, whereas others are relatively new or emerging considerations that may impact individual crew and/or family members and their ability to cope with the stress of homeport transfers. Some issues include the following:

- ∞ More married service members
- ∞ Dual military families
- ∞ Complexity of family composition
- ∞ Working spouses
- ∞ Single parents
- ∞ Homesteading
- ∞ Geographical bachelors
- ∞ Exceptional family members (EFM)
- ∞ Cost of moving
- ∞ Foreign-born spouses



The command must provide practical support services to assist during the complicated homeport transfer process. Most crew members and their families will be able to handle the increased stress associated with the transfer process. For many the transfer may represent new opportunities and challenges. For some, the change may feel like the "last straw on the camel's back." The command should be perceived as a concerned source of understanding and support for all.

The successful command will view this process as more than simply moving the platform, crew, and dependents from point A to point B and will be attuned to and recognize the benefit of dealing with the following factors:

- ∞ **QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL).** There is a positive correlation between the perception of acceptable QOL conditions and increased productivity and performance. The homeport transfer event is an opportunity for the command to demonstrate its concern for maintaining, if not improving, the quality of life for its crew and family members at the new homeport.
- ∞ **RETAIN THE BEST.** Because the transfer process is generally considered an opportunity for the crew members to "volunteer," the command is afforded an excellent opportunity to "put its best foot forward" to keep the most desirable crew members. It is also important to note that, given the realities of manning requirements, often times there are a significant number of personnel who will be making the transfer on a non-volunteer basis. In these cases the command must recognize the potential heightened stress level and possible animosity of the crew member and family toward the command. The command should direct attention to understanding the needs of these individuals and providing appropriate support services.
- ∞ **REDUCE/ELIMINATE EARLY RETURNS.** If the command is transferring to an OCONUS location and a crew member and/or his or her family must be returned prior to their PRD, the Navy must bear the costs of the early return. Proper screening for overseas assignments is the direct responsibility of the CO.
- ∞ **HAPPY FAMILY EQUAL TO HAPPY CREW.** The benefits of seeking to understand and to respond to the needs of the families may be difficult to quantify. On the other hand, family needs that are not attended to could result in

a range of dysfunctional behaviors that may have an adverse impact on the performance of the crew member.

- 8) **PREVENT PROBLEMS.** The procedures suggested and outlined in this guide are designed for the command to seek to understand the needs of crew and family and to develop internal and, if need be, external support services to meet these needs. The first and essential aspect of prevention is knowing and understanding what you're trying to prevent.
- 8) **REDUCE ANXIETY/STRESS.** As noted earlier, most crew members and families are quite capable of handling rather extraordinary levels of stress due to normal and sometimes abnormal requirements of the military lifestyle. To a large extent this individual and/or family capacity for stress management is a function of the belief that the command and the Navy understand their needs and will provide the necessary support.

The command must demonstrate to the crew and the families that the homeport transfer process is a ***total command team effort*** and that the command includes in its mission, the role of determining the needs of crew and family, and providing necessary support services to meet these needs. For the most part, the vast majority of these needs can and will be met by the leadership and support services within the command. The command must support the position that each individual's concern is the concern of the command.

**"GOOD ORGANIZATIONS TELL YOU HOW THEY COLLECT  
EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS.**

**GREAT ORGANIZATIONS TELL YOU HOW THEY  
USE THEM."**

***Harvard Business Review***

## SECTION II - ADVANCE TEAM OVERVIEW

A recommendation has been made in this kit's *Commanding Officer's Guide* to assign an Advance Team as part of the Homeport Transfer activities. The establishment and support of this team is considered essential to the success of the homeport transfer process. The Advance Team's principal responsibilities are to

- ∞ assist in gathering information on crew and family members' questions regarding the new homeport;
- ∞ travel to the new homeport to gather information and to prepare for the arrival of the command; and to
- ∞ provide feedback to the command's CO, crew, and family members.

### A. INTRODUCTION

It is imperative to have some firsthand contact with the receiving installation. One commonly used approach is to request that the receiving installation send a briefing team to the command involved in the homeport transfer. This approach has the benefit and attractiveness of being low-cost, but it has the potential drawback of getting only the "party line."

The recommended approach is for the command to establish an Advance Team that will be tasked to visit the new homeport to gather firsthand information and to debrief the crew and family members on their return. This team should include people who will be accompanying the ship and who will be on hand for at least two months after the arrival at the new homeport. At a minimum, the Advance Team should include a uniformed member of the Command Transfer Management Team (CTMT), Ombudsman, and other family member(s). The team should plan to stay about one week.

After the Advance Team members have been identified and tasked by the Commanding Officer, the team should meet and establish its own working guidelines. Some issues to consider are

- ∞ individual roles, responsibilities, and working interrelationships between and among all members of the team;

- ⌘ how to establish an effective working relationship with the Command Transfer Management Team; and
- ⌘ how to keep the Commanding Officer informed.

The team should take this opportunity to do some basic team building. Find out who is comfortable or skilled at doing certain types of tasks. Who is not comfortable with certain tasks? Who should take the lead and who should support the accomplishment of certain tasks? The goal is to develop a sense of interdependency among the team members and not just identify the leader and followers.

After these procedural matters have been addressed, the team needs to develop a plan to carry out the tasking provided by the Commanding Officer. These tasks will probably fall into three categories: Previsit, On-site, and Postvisit activities.

## **B. PREVISIT ACTIVITIES**

These are tasks primarily associated with identifying questions and issues from command, crew, and family members that need to be addressed during the Advance Team site visit to the new installation. This may require that the Advance Team play an active role in support of a number of recommended command homeport transfer events described in the next section of this guide. For example, the identification of crew and family needs may be contained in the crew and family member interviews (see Subsection III-D) or as a result of the conduct of the Homeport Transfer Workshop (see Subsection III-G). Another information gathering technique to consider is for the Advance Team to set up an "Advance Team Information" booth at the recommended Command Homeport Transfer Fair (see Subsection III-F).

There are a range of other techniques that can be considered such as the use of the Ombudsman "telephone tree," if one exists at your command or the dissemination and collection of information gathering "flyers." (See sample flyers in Announcements contained in the **Support Materials** of this kit.)

Keep in mind, however, that all Advance Team activities should be coordinated with the CTMT and be sanctioned by the Commanding Officer.

The Advance Team must also consider some basic logistical and scheduling matters such as travel and accommodation arrangements to and from the new installation. These matters should be coordinated with the CTMT.

Prior to leaving for the site visit, the command should contact the receiving installation CO and establish a point of contact at the receiving installation. This would most likely be the chairperson of the installation's Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee (RACC) who in most cases will also be the Director of the local Family Service Center (FSC). This point of contact should be informed as to the proposed itinerary of the Advance Team, its mission and a general list of issues that the Advance Team will address while on site. Telephone and other forms of contact between the new installation point of contact and the Advance Team should occur as often as necessary to clarify matters of planned events and schedules during the site visit.

The CO should also provide the Advance Team with "letters of introduction." The intent of these letters is to provide authorization for the Advance Team to act in the name of the command and will let the reader know that the command is in full support of the team's activities. This empowerment is not to be taken lightly. In most cases the letter will be a formality and support by all elements of the receiving station will be forthcoming, helpful, and generous. The letter should never be used as a "hammer;" rather it should serve as a reminder that the team is attempting to act in the best interest of the needs of its command, crew, and family members. An "Advance Team Travel List" (see Checklists in the **Support Materials** of this kit) provides a sample listing of matters that should be considered by the Advance Team prior to departure. It is expected that each team will develop or modify this list to meet its own unique needs.

### **C. ON-SITE ACTIVITIES**

Prior to departure for the on-site visit, a specific itinerary should have been developed and agreed upon by the Advance Team and the new installation's point of contact. It is recommended that the following activities be considered:

- ⌘ Initial contact and meeting with the installation point of contact.
- ⌘ Initial meeting with installation Commanding Officer. (If this meeting takes place, the team should offer to provide an "exit briefing" prior to leaving the installation.)
- ⌘ Meeting with the Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee (RACC).
- ⌘ Meeting with any personnel newly assigned to the transferring command who are temporarily assigned to the new installation awaiting the arrival of the command. (See TIPS, "Forward Detachment," in the **Support Materials**.)

- ∞ Conduct tour of installation and community.
- ∞ Conduct visits and interviews in accordance with the command's information needs and issues.

For the most part the team will be observing and collecting information on readily available and assessable services. However, the team should keep in mind that it is often helpful to qualify the obvious through other sources. For example, a typical visit to a child care center may mean the team is given a tour of the facilities with commentary from the staff. On the surface this may appear to suffice in terms of understanding the physical aspects of the center. On the other hand, a few interviews with some parents who make use of the facilities may help to better establish issues of quality and responsiveness of the center to the needs of parents and children.

A list of points of contact and telephone numbers of the organizations visited should be developed by the team along with an agreement to stay in touch in order to obtain additional information throughout the site visit or after the team returns to its command.

The team should optimize the time and use of each of its members while on the site visit. If possible, assign tasks or meetings to individuals or subteams. This is team building in action. Each day the team should set aside time to discuss and document its findings and to modify, if necessary, activities for the upcoming day. This is a vital task that should be done at a time and place where notes can be compared and preliminary reports developed to pass on to the command. This is not an "over-the-dinner-table" task.

The results of these daily team meetings can also serve to develop an "exit interview" with the CO of the installation.

#### **D. POSTSITE VISIT ACTIVITIES**

Upon return to the command the team should be prepared to provide a preliminary verbal report to the CO and/or the CTMT. This report should focus on the most salient findings and conclusions regarding those issues of greatest concern to the command.

The more formal report might be structured in the following manner:

- ∞ **OBJECTIVES.** This should be a statement of the major issues and information gathering tasks assigned to the team prior to its departure for the on-site visit.

- ∞ **ITINERARY.** List major team activities for each day of the visit. Where possible note official names of organizations and key points of contact.
- ∞ **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.** For each of the major issues or tasks assigned to the team, list the findings (facts and observations) and conclusions (the team's judgment about the issue in light of the findings). When reporting, the team should be careful to identify what may be the opinions of team members or hearsay, testimonials, and gossip of individuals interviewed during the site visit.
- ∞ **RECOMMENDATIONS.** Given the overall site visit experience, the Advance Team may offer some recommendations such as the need to gather additional information or to suggest that the site visit findings may have a specific impact on upcoming command activities relating to the homeport transfer. For maximum impact, recommendations should be limited to three or four items.
- ∞ **APPENDIX.** This section could include videotape recorded during the site visit as well as materials provided by organizations such as the new FSC, hospital, and so forth.

The Advance Team may be required to present, or support the CO's presentation, of this report to other gatherings of crew and/or family members.



### **SECTION III - ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

Suggested homeport transfer activities and associated roles and responsibilities are described in this section. Throughout these descriptions are references to other parts of this kit that should facilitate the accomplishment of the activities. The following suggested major activities will require detailed planning:

- ∞ Announcement to crew and families
- ∞ Assessment of crew and family needs
- ∞ The Transfer "Fair"
- ∞ Advance Team presite visit activities
- ∞ Advance Team visit
- ∞ Advance Team debrief and feedback
- ∞ External support services

These activities have been designed with a high degree of implementation flexibility. The best and ideal of all possible scenarios would mean that the transferring command will have the time and resources to implement all of the activities. However, it is understood that many, if not most, commands will have to merge, modify or even eliminate certain recommended events in order to meet higher order priorities. The best advice at this point is that the transferring command establish and empower a Command Transfer Management Team (see Subsection III-B) that can work with the internal and external command support services to develop an approach to meet the needs of crew and family members throughout the homeport transfer process.

#### **A. CO/XO PLANNING AND ORGANIZING**

Before taking any actions, it is suggested that the reader first review this entire chapter in order to have a better sense of the scope and interrelationship of all recommended events.

The use of a Command Specific POA&M (Plan of Actions and Milestones) could be a useful tool for scheduling and tracking events throughout the homeport transfer process. A ready-to-complete POA&M is contained in the **Support Materials** of this kit. It is recommended that the maintenance of the POA&M should be the responsibility of a Command Transfer Management Team (CTMT). However, the Advance Team can use this same format to plan and schedule activities and events unique to them.

After review of this section the CO should have sufficient information to provide specific tasking to the Advance Team, the CTMT and others (Chaplain, Ombudsman, etc.).

**B. COMMAND TRANSFER MANAGEMENT TEAM (CTMT)**

The assignment of a CTMT is recommended to provide day-to-day coordination of support services related to the homeport transfer. The establishment and support of this team is considered essential to the success of the process. The CTMT's principal responsibilities are planning and facilitating the work of action personnel, especially in terms of coordination, problem-solving, technical assistance, and liaison with crew and family members.

The CO should handpick this team, which should be made up of experienced personnel who can be afforded the time to carry out assigned duties. Other criteria for selection are

- ∞ competency in the assigned area of responsibility,
- ∞ ability to communicate,
- ∞ credibility with the crew and/or family members, and
- ∞ availability at the homeport for at least 6 months after arrival.

It is important to establish a team leader or coordinator for the CTMT.

Depending on the size of the command and the time available to implement the recommended events, the suggested candidates for the team include the following members:

- ∞ Executive Officer
- ∞ Administrative Officer
- ∞ Personnel Officer
- ∞ Housing Officer
- ∞ Command Master Chief
- ∞ Command Career Counselor
- ∞ Medical personnel
- ∞ Chaplain
- ∞ Ombudsman

There are three suggested organizational models for the CTMT:

1. The most common model is to appoint one full-time CTMT Coordinator with one or more assistants. The team would be available as a technical resource and facilitate the implementation of all assigned tasks. The Coordinator would report directly to the CO or individual designated by the CO.

2. The next model involves dual, coequal Coordinators, one with responsibility for single sailors, the other for married crew and family members. It should be noted that this model requires careful selection of the two coordinators. They will have to be able to work well together in order to preclude duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources, both human and material. Here again, the entire team would serve as a resource, and both coordinators would be answerable to the CO or CO designee.
3. A third model is to assign each member of the CTMT with responsibility for particular activities, each answerable to the CO or CO designee. This model likewise requires careful coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure that all tasks are implemented.

Regardless of the model used, it is important that the CTMT members consist of both married and single personnel. These two groups have different needs and interests and respond better to someone who they believe understands their concerns. Nevertheless, because of the overlap in activities, team members should have rapport and credibility among themselves.

Because of the importance of a successful homeport transfer and the scope of the undertaking, the performance of personnel involved with implementation of the support service activities **should be reflected in their fitness reports/evaluations.**

The CTMT should be assigned specific responsibilities to implement homeport transfer activities in accordance with the time lines reflected on the command POA&M. In general, the CTMT must ensure that crew and family members get accurate information on the new homeport; oversee the provision of support services necessary for departure; as well as for initial needs that may arise after the arrival at the new homeport. The CTMT will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring the availability of the many services and arrangements provided by the sending and receiving installations.

The CTMT should be provided administrative support to deal with correspondence with family members and requests for support services from sending and receiving installations as well as NPC. This kit contains models of flyers, announcements, and so forth that can be used throughout the homeport transfer process.

Volunteers from the crew and family members can be used to supplement the functions of the CTMT (as well as the Advance Team). There are benefits and potential problems with volunteers that should be noted (see TIPS, "Use of Volunteers," in **Support Materials**).

A meeting should be held with the CTMT to formally establish their tasking and to answer any questions regarding reporting protocol, scheduling, and levels of power and authority. Additional details on the recommended tasking for the CTMT are found in the **Command Transfer Management Team Guide**, which is part of this kit.

### **C. TRANSFER ANNOUNCEMENT TO CREW AND FAMILIES**

It is likely that by the time the command is ready to make an official announcement regarding the homeport transfer everybody will already have been discussing a wide range of related rumors. If for no other reason than "rumor control," there is a need to establish the relevant facts. In addition to dealing with matters of location and schedules, this would also be an excellent time to establish planned procedures that will assist individuals in obtaining information and services.

There are numerous approaches to notifying both crew and families about a homeport transfer. In point of fact, it is assumed that the command has a protocol by which such information is passed to crew and family members. Nonetheless, this kit provides a suggested "Announcement Flyer" that may be of use to the transferring command. A sample is contained in Announcements, found in the **Support Materials**.

It is suggested that this announcement be quickly preceded or followed by a command assembly event that would include family members. This is viewed as an opportunity for the command to forecast major planned events such as the establishment of the CTMT and the Advance Team, Transfer Fair, and other activities relating to the command transfer.

An assembly early in the process has the benefit of setting a positive stage for all follow-on activities and getting a quick handle on potential problems and issues. Alternatively, if the number of "assembly type" events are limited, it is recommended that the proposed Command Transfer Fair (see Subsection III-F) take precedence.

Throughout the homeport transfer process, and especially during the early stages, the command should make use of any existing information dissemination forums such as installation newspapers, Ombudsman newsletters, and so forth to inform the community at large about the pending transfer.

#### **D. ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS: CREW AND FAMILIES**

If at all possible, each crew and family member should be interviewed to determine their concerns and needs. For the crew members, this is an opportunity to discuss the following matters:

- ∞ Volunteering to transfer with the command
- ∞ Extensions
- ∞ Early outs
- ∞ Retirement
- ∞ Reenlistments

For the families, this interview process would afford an excellent opportunity for identifying needs or problems early and on a one-to-one basis. Several checklists are contained in **Support Materials** to assist the interview process.

The individual or individuals selected to conduct these interviews should have a high level of credibility in representing the CO's interest and commitment to understanding the needs of crew and families. If at all possible, a single individual should conduct the interviews to minimize variance of style and interpretation.

Results of these interviews should be promulgated to the crew and family members. Ideally, this feedback should be provided during some sort of gathering such as a command assembly or even part of a workshop that could be developed specifically for this purpose.

The assessment results should also be helpful in planning for the Transfer Fair as well as focusing the type of support services that may be needed from the sending installation Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee (RACC) and Family Service Center (FSC). The assessment activities and feedback should also precede the sending of the Advance Team on their site visit. At all times information provided by individual crew members and/or families should be treated as confidential. Reported information during the feedback sessions should be presented only in an aggregate form.

#### **E. SUPPORT REQUEST: SENDING INSTALLATION**

Support should be requested as soon as possible. The sending (or losing) installation can be of particular assistance in support of the recommended "Homeport Transfer Fair" by providing, through the local FSC, a Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service (SITES) report,

which is a comprehensive computerized printout of installation and community services available at all installations. The FSC should also provide a standard Welcome Aboard Packet regarding the new homeport.

Throughout the homeport transfer process, support from the sending installation should include services such as legal, housing, PSD, and other services to assist both crew and family members to detach from the sending installation. Points of contact between the CTMT and the local installation's RACC need to be established as soon as possible.

The Family Service Center at the sending installation also has the capability to cofacilitate (with a member from the command) a workshop entitled, "The Homeport Transfer Workshop" (see Subsection III-G), which is designed for all crew and family members and especially those who may have difficulty coping with the increased stress caused by the homeport transfer.

#### **F. COMMAND TRANSFER "FAIR"**

This highly recommended event is designed to be a primary delivery system to get information, assistance, and guidance to the families of service members assigned to the transferring command. The success of this event is largely determined by how user friendly it is for working, busy, less-interested crew members and their families.

Essentially, the concept is to organize all possible support services in an attractive and easy-to-access setting. The support services are then tasked with not only explaining the service they can provide but also physically providing this service to all those interested. This allows individuals and/or families to ask questions, gather information, and also **process paper work on the spot** about a range of issues including the following:

- ∞ Legal wills and Powers of Attorney
- ∞ OHA, HOLA, and COLA
- ∞ Pets
- ∞ Housing
- ∞ Education
- ∞ TRICARE
- ∞ Base services
- ∞ Pay questions
- ∞ ID card renewal
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- 80 FSC information
- 80 Navy-Marine Corps Relief information

The fair allows crew and families to come to a one time, one place event with parking reserved, baby-sitting provided, and other excuses for not attending eliminated. Then, not only can families gather information and ask questions of the support service providers directly, but more important, they can have paperwork, forms, wills and so forth **processed on the spot**. A successful fair eliminates extra trips to the base to make appointments and process paperwork at various base locations. This effort by the command to conduct this fair also shows the crew family members that the command and the Navy are there to support them during the confusion of a homeport transfer.

Details about planning for, setting up and conducting a Fair are contained in TIPS, found in the **Support Materials**. To establish this event, there will need to be a high level of coordination between the transferring command and the sending installation. To optimize attendance, the command may wish to combine this event with a command picnic and/or other social event. For larger commands, it may be necessary to have the fair on two separate occasions to maximize attendance.

If time, resources, and so forth are a problem, the "Homeport Transfer Workshop" as well as the "Presite Visit Feedback Meeting" (see Subsection III-H) could be conducted during the Fair. This would require some detailed planning and coordination between the CTMT, the Advance Team, and the local RACC and FSC.

## **G. HOMEPORT TRANSFER WORKSHOP**

Experience indicates that a number of both crew and family members would benefit from an opportunity to openly discuss their feelings about the move and its impact on themselves and/or their families. A workshop outline is contained in the **Workshop Guide**. The intent is to provide an opportunity for issue generation and problem solving within the group. The vast majority of attendees will find that the process itself will serve as a helpful catharsis. Those that may continue to have problems will be made aware of additional support services such as counseling from within the FSC.

CAUTION: Historically, announcements, invitations, and even "strong suggestions" have resulted in minimal turnout for these types of workshops. Frequently, those who do show up are not those who would most benefit from such a process or experience. And yet, FSC counselors, Chaplains, Career Counselors, and so forth are overbooked throughout the Navy

dealing with issues relating to individuals and families who have personal difficulties such as the stress of PCS moves. The challenge for the command is to determine a strategy for getting those crew and/or family members who have the greatest need to this workshop. The potential consequences of not having these people attend the workshop may be that they become "THE" problem individual or family. It takes only a few problems to drain an enormous amount of command resources.

## **H. PRESITE VISIT MEETING**

Prior to sending the Advance Team to the new homeport, the following events should have been completed:

- ∞ Official announcement of the homeport transfer to all crew and family members
- ∞ Interviews with crew and family members
- ∞ Feedback on the interviews
- ∞ The Homeport Transfer Workshop
- ∞ The Homeport Transfer Fair

Each of these events may provide information, questions, and/or issues that will be useful to the Advance Team presite visit planning. Sample checklists for the Advance Team are contained in the **Support Materials**. Another data collection technique could include the availability of an Advance Team booth during the Fair. Crew and family members will have a direct means to voice questions or issues they would like the Advance Team to consider during the site visit to the new homeport.

The CO along with the CTMT and the Advance Team should conduct a presite visit planning meeting to outline issues that must be addressed by the Advance Team during its site visit. An outcome of this meeting should include a preliminary itinerary, which should be forwarded to the receiving installation RACC representative.

## **I. SUPPORT REQUEST: RECEIVING INSTALLATION**

As with the sending installation, the receiving installation should be contacted as soon as possible. The primary service to be requested of the receiving installation has to do with support for the Advance Team planned activities. Prior to the site visit to the receiving installation the Advance Team will develop an itinerary and list of questions and issues that reflect the needs of the command. In most cases a number of "needs assessment" types of activities such as crew and family interviews, the Transition Fair, and so forth will precede the site visit by the Advance



Team. These events plus the direct tasking from the Commanding Officer should form the basis for establishing the Advance Team itinerary. Details of recommended Advance Team activities are contained in the **Advance Team Guide**.

Personnel assigned to the transferring command who are or will be at the receiving installation awaiting the arrival of the transferring command should be considered as an asset to the command. For recommendations on possible uses of these personnel see TIPS, "Advance Detachment," in the **Support Materials**.

## **J. SENDING INSTALLATION ONGOING SUPPORT**

Throughout the entire homeport transfer process, the sending installation must be prepared to make available a range of support services to the transferring command. The RACC and FSC should establish a single point of contact with the transferring command. The transferring command in turn should establish a point of contact such as the Coordinator of the CTMT.

In addition to support services for individual crew and family members, the sending installation might also be called on to provide facilities for an On-Shore Detachment to facilitate the coordination of services related to the transfer process. There may also be a need for the sending installation to provide facilities for a temporary Stay Behind Detachment to coordinate the needs of transferring command families whose relocation schedule may be delayed. This Stay Behind Detachment might also be tasked to take care of any residual command responsibilities at the sending installation (see TIPS, "Stay-Behind Det.," in the **Support Materials**).

Detailed information on the support of the sending installation is provided in the **Relocation Assistance Coordination Committee and Family Service Center Guide**.

## **K. SITE VISIT TO RECEIVING INSTALLATION**

The Advance Team site visit itinerary will be based on the expressed needs of the transferring command CO, its crew, and family members. A letter from the transferring command to the CO of the receiving installation will have set the stage for contact between the Advance Team and the receiving station Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee and Family Service Center. Details of these proposed activities are contained in both the **Advance Team Guide** and the **Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee and Family Service Center Guide**.

Ideally, the Advance Team will meet initially with the RACC to discuss the needs of the transferring command. The team should also meet with any personnel assigned to the transferring command (Advance Detachment).

#### **L. POSTSITE VISIT FEEDBACK MEETING**

When the Advance Team returns to the transferring command, they should be prepared to provide a debrief to the CO. This should be in the form of findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding each of the major issues for which they were tasked to obtain information.

If time, resources and facilities are available, then an assembly of all crew and family members should be held to provide a debrief of the Advance Team visit. Unmet needs and issues identified during this session will serve as the primary tasking for ongoing activities of the CTMT.

#### **M. OVERSEAS HOMEPORT TRANSFERS**

Any move to an overseas homeport causes stress and requires a period of adjustment. These transfers involve a move to a culture that is often radically different and thousands of miles from the United States. "Overseas incidents" can harm the Navy's mission and can jeopardize relations with host countries or local communities.

Because of these potential problems, FSCs at overseas receiving installations provide intercultural relations (ICR) training programs. These programs provide detailed information on how to understand culture in foreign countries through understanding the U.S. culture, dos and don'ts, and basic coping skills. The course also covers practical matters such as

- ∞ use of public transportation,
- ∞ local currency,
- ∞ shopping,
- ∞ eating out,
- ∞ key phrases in the local language, and
- ∞ where to find what.

The course should also include a field trip. Experience has shown that the most valuable field trip is the "self-guided" tour in which the participant is provided an explanation of the transportation system, a map, and a specific destination. Participants must get themselves to

and from a specified destination. Experience has shown that people who complete a self-guided tour are more confident, travel more frequently throughout the host country, adjust more easily, and have a better tour of duty.

Several commands have provided ICR training in transit by arranging for transit shipriders from the gaining homeport installation FSC. In order for ICR training to be taught effectively en route, the command must allow crew members to take time away from their operational requirements to attend classes. The classes should be presented to small groups; sessions of 3 hours have proven successful, or several one-hour sessions can be held. Other reinforcing activities include

- ∞ cultural bulletins,
- ∞ videotapes,
- ∞ CCTV, and
- ∞ cultural events to introduce typical meals or music.

It is strongly recommended that the CO make the ICR training mandatory and that these courses be attended within 2 weeks after arrival.

**APPENDIX A**  
**PERS-409 HOMEPORT TRANSFER BRIEFING OUTLINE**

## **PERS-409 HOMEPORT TRANSFER BRIEFING**

### **A. WHAT IS A HOMEPORT?**

- ⌘ Location at which deployable unit is assigned
- ⌘ Assignment made by CNO (OP-09B2)
- ⌘ Based on recommendations of Fleet Commanders and Operational forces
- ⌘ Established to provide operational capabilities in area

### **B. WHY CHANGE HOMEPORTS?**

- ⌘ Fleet reorganization
- ⌘ Shift of unit to new port for overhaul
- ⌘ Shift of unit to Naval Reserve Force (NRF)
- ⌘ Changing overseas commitments
- ⌘ Domestic politics/resource distribution
- ⌘ Foreign politics (basing rights)

### **C. TYPES OF HOMEPORT CHANGES**

- ⌘ CONUS to CONUS
- ⌘ CONUS to OCONUS
- ⌘ OCONUS to CONUS
- ⌘ OCONUS TO OCONUS
- ⌘ "Permanent"
- ⌘ "Temporary" of known duration

### **D. NEW HOMEPORT ISSUES**

- ⌘ Sailors may retain PRD or be extended
- ⌘ New area may require DoD tour minimum
- ⌘ Most are volunteers for new homeport
- ⌘ Nonvolunteers may go anyway
- ⌘ Old base downsizing limits options

**E. ISSUING ORDERS**

- ⌘ Most stay with ship to new homeport
- ⌘ Orders for those at/close to PST
- ⌘ Orders for those not screening
- ⌘ Diversions of gains also checked
- ⌘ Special cases examined carefully

**F. KEY PLAYERS AND ISSUES**

- ⌘ CNO/CINC: Mission capability
- ⌘ Area Commander: Host services
- ⌘ Command: Mission readiness
- ⌘ NPC: Crew stability and readiness
- ⌘ Sailor: Career and family needs
- ⌘ Support services: Type and quality

**G. PROCEDURES**

- ⌘ Operators ID need and submit FNJ (Fact and Justification)
- ⌘ OP-09B forwards to CNO
- ⌘ If Navy only, then approve
- ⌘ If others, then forward (SECNAV)
- ⌘ CNO authorizes and "promulgates effective" date
- ⌘ CINC, TYCOM, NPC, and ship may schedule assignment conference  
(Mainly for large commands and most commands shifting to OCONUS)
- ⌘ Ship changes homeport

**H. CONFERENCE PROCEDURES**

- ⌘ PERS-409 gets official notice and mails HOMEPORT CHANGE KIT
- ⌘ PERS-409 works with ALCON to schedule conference.
- ⌘ Representatives from ship, TYCOM, EPMAC, and PERS-409 meet at  
NPC to "hand-tool" orders
- ⌘ PERS-409 remains POC for new/unresolved issues.
- ⌘ PERS-404 is the POC for aviation squadrons.

**APPENDIX B**  
**HOMEPORT TRANSFER EXPERIENCE OF THE USS REEVES**

- † ***Must be a TEAM effort***
- † ***Treat like a Fleet Exercise***
- † ***Must have a comprehensive PLAN***
- † ***Cannot be "Business-As-Usual"***
- † ***This is YOUR move***
- † ***Know what you rate--and INSIST on it!***

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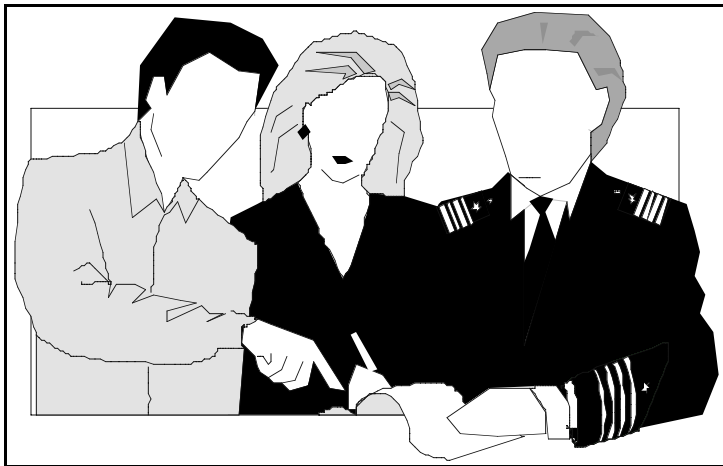
PHILOSOPHY 101



## APPENDIX B - USS REEVES EXPERIENCE

### A. EACH HOMEPORT TRANSFER IS UNIQUE

To be sure, ours was not the first ship to undergo a homeport transfer in the U.S. Navy. Most ships, at sometime in their lives, have had the experience of a homeport transfer. Often just to another port for overhauls, but sometimes it involves much longer distances like for the REEVES changing its homeport from Yokosuka to Pearl Harbor.



*You must know the rules.*

Each homeport transfer is unique and what greets you and your crew on the other end of the transfer can be like a splash of cold water. For example, you may leave a base where you can drive a car or can commute on the weekends and arrive at a base where there is an ocean in between and there is no way to get from one place to another using the normal methods of transportation. It's a

major operation that each ship must conduct on its own, but there are some ***basic principles and concepts*** of approaching the task properly. Such principles include a ***commitment*** to staffing it properly and an open ***communications system*** throughout the entire homeport shift and its aftermath. There will also be opportunities that you will have to seize. You must know what the rules are and how to execute them. Otherwise, you will not have an effective homeport shift.

### B. TEAM EFFORT

This is a ***team*** effort. There is probably nothing that takes more organization than for a ship to undertake a homeport shift effectively. You have to treat it as if it were a fleet exercise; you've got to have a ***comprehensive plan***.

You may think this is just going to occur by everybody getting together and saying, "Oh well, today we're going to have a homeport shift and let's get to it!" Then you'll need to be prepared for maximum confusion. It's just not going to happen automatically. You have to think about this thing ahead of time and you have to approach the overall task with the same kind of concept as you would any fleet exercise. It takes all the departments to be involved. There is a heavy logistics aspect to it; you have to assign your operations accordingly; you have to ensure that everything is tailored as best you can, and that everything fits the exercise and fits the schedule you've been given.

***You cannot do this homeport shift as "business as usual."*** It's too big an evolution. You cannot assume that everything has been preplanned for you and your ship and that there will be adequate and unchanging lead times for getting individuals their orders or getting people moved or establishing opportunities for reenlistments or early outs. You cannot treat this as another "one or two people being shifted"--this is the entire ship.

You must always think of this as your move and no one cares more about your move than you do. There are people who will help you. From the first you hear of the transfer, there will be people who say they care a lot, but it is absolutely critical that you understand that it is YOU who are going to be affected.

If the ship gets underway and steams out and the families are unhappy or they are not supported properly, it will come back to haunt you. Certainly you can get some assistance, but you have to ***know what you rate and you have to insist on it.***



***No one cares more about this move than you do.***

**USE YOUR STRENGTHS**

- † ***Command climate***
- † ***Operational schedule***
- † ***Internal communications***
- † ***Command support team***

**PHILOSOPHY**  
**(Bachelor's Level)**

### C. USE YOUR STRENGTHS

You have to start to map out this kind of evolution by first assessing your strengths and weaknesses. Only in this way can you be sure that you are putting the right kind of effort in the most reasonable and realistic perspective. At REEVES, I thought our strengths were in command climate, operational schedule, internal communications, and our internal support team. Our command climate was very good. People liked being in REEVES. People wanted to stay in REEVES. They were happy to be on-board the ship and the result was that it made it a lot easier to convince people that it was in their interest and the ship's interest to complete the homeport shift as a team. This meant getting everybody on the same course and using the entire chain of command to make sure it went successfully.

Our operational schedule in this particular case also made a difference because our shift included a 3-month trip to bilateral exercises in the South China Sea. As a result, we could show people that we were not just going directly from homeport to homeport and then start an overhaul right after that, but we were going to be able to get some visits in between and a last big fling in WESTPAC before we were going to sit in a shipyard for a year.

Our internal communications were very strong. It was my particular policy that I would meet with each of the pay grades once every other month; just me and them. The format of these meetings was that I would provide information, the view from the top as it were, and they would ask me questions on any subject. During these times I always discussed the operations that were coming up to let them know how we were going to be proceeding. In the case of the homeport shift, I let them know where we were going, the schedule, our plans, where we expected them to berth while we were there, and so forth. ***We really tried hard to make sure that they felt involved in the process.*** The Command Master Chief was also heavily involved in making sure that these communications got passed around. The XO and the Department Heads, in my weekly meetings with them, did exactly the same kind of things. I felt that the strength of our communications was going to be helpful in spreading the word on what was going to happen with regard to the homeport shift.

Our Command Support Team was very strong. My wife, Paula, was committed to the process. All the wives knew who she was. All the wives took an active role in sponsoring events and making sure that the families were involved. The Ombudsmen were both very experienced and active in their roles and they were very capable of functioning on their own. The Command Support Team, as well as the wives, the Command Master Chief, the Ombudsman, and the Chaplain, made a big difference. I also felt that our use of the command support team would pay dividends because they would make sure that the families would stay informed.

**RECOGNIZE YOUR WEAKNESSES**

- † *Personnel Organization*
- † *Inertia and Interest*
- † *Magnitude of the Effort*
- † *No Corporate Memory*

**PHILOSOPHY**  
**(Master's Level)**

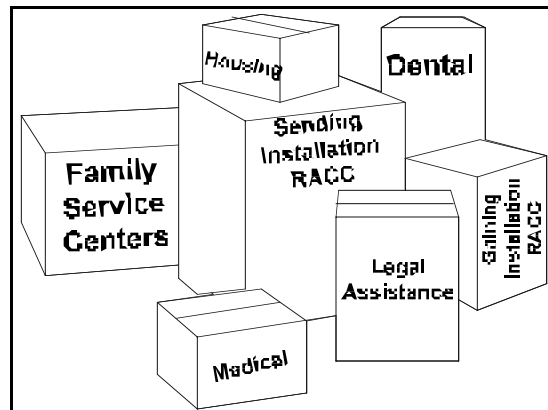
## D. RECOGNIZE YOUR WEAKNESSES

Sometimes this is the most difficult thing to do. In the REEVES case I felt that the personnel organization was not as good as it could have been. The support of a homeport shift is a very difficult thing requiring a lot of coordinated activities. I felt that our personnel organization was weak in customer service. They weren't as familiar with the rules as they should have been and they were more interested in doing business as usual rather than planning ahead and taking aggressive actions.

Another problem you'll have with this kind of effort is level of interest or inertia. After all, who can get excited over a homeport shift? If anything, it's a large pain in the "gazornpled." Anything that takes this long and is basically viewed in a negative way will mean that it will be very difficult to get people to put in the kind of needed effort. You can say that you need to plan like a fleet exercise but a fleet exercise is a lot more fun (usually) and it certainly is not as big a pain. So battling inertia and waning interest may be an ongoing task for you and the entire crew. You've got to make sure people really are involved in this thing. The magnitude of the effort is something that is not greatly appreciated when you start it. However, if you hesitate for too long to tackle this thing you're simply not going to get where you need to be at the right time.

Transferring 5 or 10 or 20 people before deployment is not anywhere near the kind of effort you are going to have to expend when confronted with a homeport shift. You are now required to move all the families and the supporting infrastructure out of the state or across the country. For example, you may not realize that some people who need cars may not have them. Crew members and their families reporting from distant places will present you with a host of simple to complex problems.

You need to use all the resources that are available: the Family Service Centers, the losing and gaining homeports, people in housing, and the hospitals. By developing a time line you can determine when things are looking like they are lagging behind or to keep pace with scheduled activities. You should develop a realistic plan and certainly the operation plan will be the driving factor.



*Use all available resources.*

**COMMANDING OFFICER'S INVOLVEMENT**

- † ***Set the tone***
- † ***"Sell" the move***
- † ***Put in the time***
- † ***Monitor the process***

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**PHILOSOPHY**  
**(Ph.D. Level)**

## E. COs MUST BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED

Things can get out of hand quickly if you don't control what's happening. Because its such a large effort, there may be the tendency not to do anything until it's too late or the tendency to take the attitude of, "So what if six months becomes five months, it's not a big deal. We can always solve it later."

In the case of the REEVES there had not been a homeport shift from Yokosuka to Pearl Harbor in 10 years and as a result there was no corporate knowledge on the ship, in Yokosuka, or in Pearl Harbor on how to do this kind of thing.

Things can become overwhelming in a heartbeat. For example, the impact of moving 130 families both from Yokosuka and CONUS to one place at one particular time and within a couple of months is a problem, that if left unattended, can become a nightmare. It gets worse if you have not had this experience before and you don't know what benefits and/or entitlements you rate.

These kinds of things can put you solidly behind the power curve. Overseas housing allowances are certainly a case in point. There are very peculiar rules about it. In fact, some of the rules are changing as a result of our experience, but until you know what those rules are, you are going to have a very difficult time because up to this point there has been no documented corporate knowledge on how all of this is to be done.



*Things can get out of hand quickly.*



- † *Never too early to start*
- † *Use all the resources available*
- † *Develop a time line for execution*
- † *Operational schedule is the driving factor*
- † *Use operational windows to best advantage:*
  - ☹ *Advance Team briefings*
  - ☹ *House-hunting leave*
- † *Stick to the plan as best you can*
- † *Establish points of contact*

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#### PLANNING

## F. PLANNING

It's never too early to start the development of a plan. ***We started planning a year before the event actually occurred.*** At times, you will not know the exact date that you will depart for the new homeport. There is also the difficulty in making sure people know about it, because sometimes it will run up to SECRET until everything's been cleared and then you officially only have a few months. But if you know its going to happen you can start your plan.

You don't want to send 25% of your crew on house hunting leaves when you are going to be underway. In one particular case we were extended for 2 weeks at sea during a period of time where we had about 15 or 20 families that were scheduled to go back to Pearl Harbor because they were moving out of quarters and moving into Pearl. This took some creative effort on our part. We flew the guys off from Okinawa, but you don't always have this opportunity to do these things. You have to use the operational schedule as best you can.

You're going to have to do the same thing for your Advance Team briefings. You're going to want to make sure that you have as many people there as you can. You shouldn't schedule a meeting just because you know it's between two underway periods because you may get limited participation. You're going to have to do some creative thinking to make things happen to your best advantage.

We didn't send out everyone at the same time; we split them up into three or four groups. A lot of people use their house-hunting leave to move their families at the same time. So you have certain entitlements when you do those sorts of things and you need to use your windows of opportunity to your best advantage.

***Stick to your plan.*** We all know how much more difficult it is to execute a plan than it is to draw it up on paper. Once you complete your plan, put it on the bulletin boards and announce it to the crew. However, keep in mind that you're not going to have an easy time convincing the crew that you've got a good plan and that you've got their best interest at heart if you keep changing it. Everyone realizes that the OPS schedule may change, but if you've got house-hunting leave scheduled for the following month, try not to change it even if you're penalized for not having the right kinds of people while underway. Establish points of contact with shore installation support services that can help the ship and crew. This is just too big an effort to ignore available resources. You just can't say, "Oh, XO you've got the whole ball of wax," because he can't do it. Set up a point of contact, for example, for housing; maybe it will be the Chaplain, the Family Service Center, or the leading Personnelman for orders and tickets. Set all this up and stick to it. Publish the points of contact so people know who to talk to ashore.

- † ***Ship must remain operational***
- † ***Keep the best crew***
- † ***Don't do anything illegal***
- † ***Be consistent***

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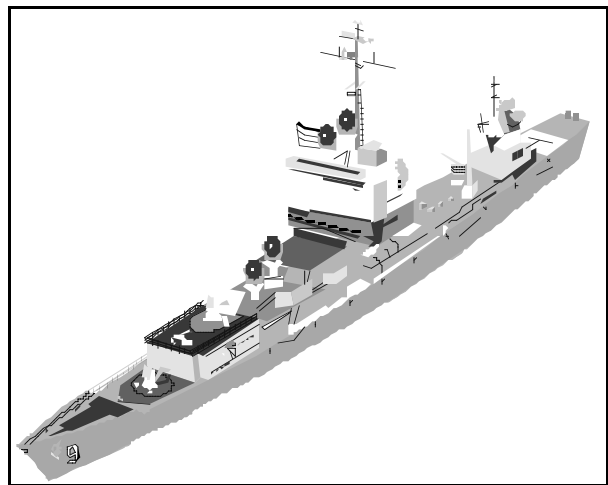
**NEEDS OF THE SHIP**

## G. THE NEEDS OF THE SHIP

The needs of the ship have to come first and most people understand this. We've got to remain operational. Under no circumstances would most COs acknowledge that it would be OK to let their best technicians go house hunting during a 3-week underway period. You have to remain operational.

You've got to try to keep the best crew on board. Although for some people it may be the best thing to stay in the same homeport or to shift over to another ship, you may not be able to accommodate everyone. It is to your best advantage to keep the best crew and with a good command climate and a good approach to a homeport shift you have a good chance in most cases to keep the best crew members with your command.

Don't do anything illegal. A lot of times the tendency is to think, "Whatever it takes to get this job done!" There are entitlements and a lot of rules you have to follow. You just have to be sure that everyone understands that no one wants to do anything illegal. If the book gives you 10 days for house hunting, don't make it 12 days. Just try to make sure that you're turning in the right forms and those kinds of things. You may not have done this kind of thing in a long time and you may not be doing something right, ***but never consciously do anything illegal.***



*Keep the best crew.*

Try to make this whole thing as painless as possible. Try to make it easier to do the job right than to do it wrong. Execute your part of the plan as consistently as possible. If the crew recognizes that the command has done everything possible to make the move as painless as possible, there is no doubt that the ship will benefit in the long run.

- † *Interview each crew member  
(publish results)*
- † *Be aware of impact on family*
- † *Keep your best people on board*
- † *Send a team to NPC*

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NEEDS OF THE CREW

## H. NEEDS OF THE CREW

Desires of the crew are very important to a successful homeport shift concept. You must interview each member on what they want. In the case of the REEVES with 450 crew members, I directed preliminary interviews by the division officers, chiefs, and so forth. I consciously made sure that information was available on what individuals could get, what they deserved, and what their entitlements and benefits were. We also focused on whether or not they should be a volunteer or a nonvolunteer and what that meant. In the case of the REEVES, we had the XO, with Command Master Chief, standing by interview each member of the crew.



*Interview each crew member.*

The impact on each family must be considered. You need to know who's married, who has children, who has a family back in CONUS and is, therefore, a "geographical bachelor." In some cases, special education needs may have an impact. Probably the single most critical question is whether you've got a volunteer or nonvolunteer because this makes a tremendous difference on the length of tour the individual will have on board the ship as well as the type of entitlements the individual will rate. Generally speaking, if it's not an overhaul then this means the individual will have to have a year on board. This has the potential for changing the prescribed sea tour and the individual may have to extend for that period of time. The command has the responsibility for getting all these extensions in on time so that these people don't get "hosed" when they get to the new homeport. Serious problems can arise involving such issues as housing entitlements, which may not be allowed for individuals who have not properly extended. This may result in having to solve this problem long distance. Not good.

You want to get your best people the best deal. This is an opportunity for helping your people. If some of your best people want to stay with the ship, or stay at this homeport, or whatever, this is an opportunity for helping them get what *they* want. Try to hold out your best orders for your superstars. This is the sort of thing that has a tremendous impact on the crew and it's the kind of thing most of us think about anyway, but if you can get your best guy the best deal then you won't have people saying, "Gee, I really worked my buns off for this command and I got the same deal as Joe Smuckatelle who has already been to Mast twice." This is an opportunity. Use it to keep your best people on board. If you can't keep them on board, this is still a good opportunity to show that you are looking out for your people.

† ***Cross-decking***

† ***Extensions***

† ***Reenlistments***

† ***Early outs***

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CONSIDER ALL OPTIONS

Command attention and involvement are mandatory. I had a list of every single guy on the crew whether he was a volunteer or nonvolunteer. I knew if his PRD was coming up or if he didn't want to go. I knew what we wanted to get for him. I saw these guys on the deckplates and

I'd talked to them and say, "Hey, look, I see that you're a nonvolunteer. Are you sure you understand what this means." We would target a certain number of people so that we could make sure that they knew what they were getting into. I recall one case where we were able to save our best HT on board the ship because we were aware of the wife's desire (through the Command Support Team) to move to Hawaii for a year before the crew member was up for shore duty orders. In this case, we offered to extend the crew member and still got him a good set of orders when it was time for him to transfer.

If you do interviews, publish them. If you don't publish the interview results you're not going to know who is a volunteer and who is not. It also has the benefit of other crew members looking at the list (you hope that you've got a lot of people who are listed as wanting to stay on board) and seeing some reasons for changing their minds and opting to volunteer.

You need to send a team to NPC and it should be a fairly high-ranking team such as the XO, the Command Master Chief and senior Personnelman so that they know exactly where everybody is. They should know exactly what you expect and, as necessary, they should be able to broker a deal on the spot. You want to make sure that when they come back they can say, "OK, BT2 here's the orders you got, here's what we are going to get in accordance with our discussion and we'll see where we can go from there." You need to track this as it goes on by checking on the messages that go back and forth. Be sure to keep track of the deals that you've made with NPC. Make sure that you've got everything ironed out so that the guy who is on the receiving end (the guy who you're really looking out for) gets the right deal.

You do have options with your people. You can cross-deck them over to another ship. You can extend them on board. You might be able to reenlist a guy early for orders. You might get an "early out." You need to understand some of the newer programs for early outs. Look at all the options you have at your disposal and use them to the best advantage for the crew and for the ship.



- † *Each family is unique*
- † *Special cases such as Exceptional Family Members*
- † *Overseas screening*
- † *Sponsorship*
- † *Early returns*
- † *Don't forget the single sailor*

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CONCERNS OF THE FAMILY

## **I. CONCERNS OF THE FAMILY**

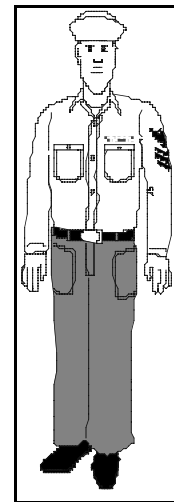
Resist the temptation to treat everyone as if they were the same. Don't think that what applies for one applies to all. Not everyone is going to want to move into housing; not everyone is going to want to move to the new homeport. Each family is an individual and unique family. This is where your Command Support Team can make a tremendous difference. You need to check for special cases and special needs children. You need to understand how to take care of those who will remain in the old homeport. You still have responsibilities for them.

For some, there may be a need for screening individuals for overseas assignments. You are going to have to be very careful about this. Some may not screen. In some cases the screening process will reveal serious conditions about the family that you didn't know about.

In other cases, when you are scheduled for a homeport shift, you lose sponsorship and people can only stay in the losing homeport housing for a limited period of time. In the case of the REEVES, there were some Japanese wives who had been in Yokosuka for most of their entire married time and they were going to lose command sponsorship. If they didn't have support in the community, they were going to be in the "hurt locker" because you just can't get there from here on the amount of money it costs to live on the economy in Japan without having the availability of using the exchange, commissary, and things like that because they were no longer eligible for housing. You need to know how to solve these types of problems. Some people may look to early return for dependents, which in some cases may be the best for everyone.

Be as flexible as possible on leave opportunity because if the family is ready to go then it's the best thing for them to do.

Don't forget the single sailor. Even though he doesn't have a family, maybe he's got a car or bicycle he wants to transfer or may have other special needs, requirements, or requests.



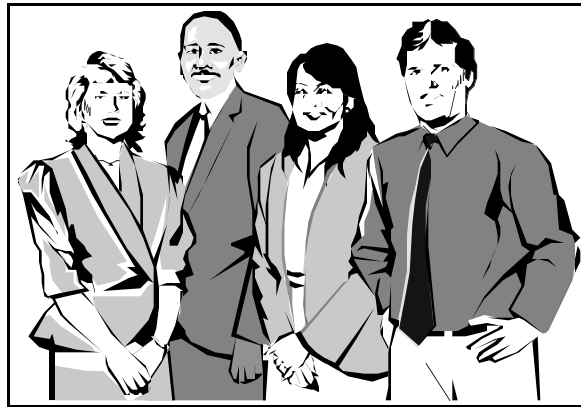
- † *Everybody ashore works for the ship*
- † *Maintain dialogue with those who can support you*
- † *Use common sense*
- † *Be innovative!*

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WORKING WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE

## J. WORKING WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE

In my opinion, in cases like a homeport shift, everybody ashore works for the ship. They have to know what it is that you want. If you don't tell them what you're looking for or if you don't tell them how you'd like to approach this, they are going to give you the Mark One/Mod Zero answer. They don't know all the rules, but neither do you. Sometimes even though you may get what seems to be a very strange answer from them, it may be the right answer. The best approach is to maintain a dialogue with those that can and should support you.



*Everybody works for the ship!*

Use common sense. Remember that there are no dumb questions, but dumb answers are not unheard of. Don't take something that sounds stupid as the rule. At least run these things to ground to make sure that the proper and knowledgeable source has been checked. Work together to get the job done. For example, we worked together on travel arrangements. We made sure that if we had 10 or 12 or 15 families leaving we would try to book them on the same flight. You need to make arrangements for special cases. You can make housing arrangements ahead of time. When we sent people over they had their housing forms right in their hands.

The gaining homeport may have to do some things for the command prior to arrival. In the case of the REEVES, we had to have the barracks renovated. There were other general activities regarding the ship's homecoming. This takes manpower. We arranged, with concurrence from the Group Commander, to have those newly assigned personnel who were not on board but at the gaining homeport put in a cadre and to use them to make sure that people got met and that work on the barracks was completed.

- † ***Team represents command interests***
- † ***Who you select is critical***
- † ***Give team the authority needed***
- † ***Back the team***
- † ***Provide Letters of Introduction***
- † ***Secure comprehensive support***
  - ☞ **Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee**
  - ☞ **Family Service Centers**

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**THE ADVANCE TEAM**

## **K. THE ADVANCE TEAM**

The Advance Team represents you and your command's interests. You have to get the right people to make up this group because they are going to go to the gaining homeport and try to ask the right kinds of questions and return with the right kinds of answers. They have to know what to look for. On the REEVES we had several meetings before the Advance Team left. You can't have the Advance Team ask the right questions if the crew and their families don't have an opportunity to express what their needs and issues are.

**You must give the team full authority and back them up.** They may not always know exactly what you're looking for, but they have to have the feeling that they are speaking for the ship. And when they do that, unless they are doing something that's really bad or illegal, you should try to back them up as best you can.

Who you select makes a big difference. In the case of the REEVES, we sent a fairly unusual group: I sent my wife and two Ombudsmen. I sent no active duty people. My reasoning was that they would ask the right kinds of questions from the family and that's who was really being moved. They would also ask the right questions because they had been part of the overall planning process and had attended all those meetings that generated questions for the Advance Team to consider.

To assist the Advance Team, I wrote letters of introduction to the appropriate people we were sending them to visit. This let the people at the gaining command know that they were dealing with someone who had the official blessing of the ship.

The Advance Team should meet with the Relocation Assistance Coordinating Committee, and the FSC. In the case of the REEVES, the Advance Team did a tour of the area with a video camera including all the different housing areas, the daycare centers, and schools and taped interviews. When they returned they had a tremendous volume of information they could show on videotape.

- † *Keep communication lines open*
- † *Try to anticipate potential problems*
- † *Have effective representation*
  - ☞ *At gaining homeport*
  - ☞ *At losing homeport*
- † *Get all the facts before you act*

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LESSONS LEARNED

## L. SOME LESSONS LEARNED

You must make sure that communication lines remain open on both sides, up and down. You have to make sure that people are willing to ask questions, that you get the proper answer, and that you haven't forgotten about them. These kinds of things are absolutely critical to the way you're going to be able to make this homeport shift work. If they feel like they are not getting their questions answered, then you're not going to get very far. You must stay ahead of the game. Anticipate, as best you can, the problems you're going to encounter and try to work ahead of the game and not have to play catch-up. If you ever get behind the power curve you may never recover.

Be sure that you have effective representatives in place at both the gaining and losing homeports. In the case of the REEVES, I assigned a wife as the senior wives' representative and she had my full backing. Leave somebody if you can. Sometimes an active duty person would be more useful, but often is not available. If possible the command should have representatives at the gaining command to prepare for the arrival, to ask the right questions, and to get back in touch with the ship if additional support or clout is needed.

Get all the facts before you act. Sometimes it appears that there may be particular problems on finances or housing, but be careful not to let loose a shotgun blast based on faulty information. Some problems just can't be solved. You're just going to have to recognize what these are and say, "OK, that's just the way it goes. I can't solve all these difficulties. I can't get all the people into housing, some people just are not able to get in." You're going to have to let people know what the limits are.



*Get all the facts.*

It always seems, as was true in our case, that the biggest complainers moved first. Some families turned down housing offerings because of minor inconveniences which in turn was the cause for problems that seemed to get blown out of proportion. You just have to hope that the planning, the resources, and the effort you put in place will carry the day more often than not.



- † *Stick to your plan*
- † *"Business-as-usual" doesn't apply*
- † *Team effort is essential*
- † *Communications are critical*
- † *Homeport shift activities continue after arrival*

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**SUMMARY**

## **M. SUMMARY**

Make a plan and stick to it as best you can. No plan is completely free of errors and almost all plans will be subject to unanticipated pressures that will force revisions. Make sure that people are executing the plan.

Business as usual doesn't hack it. It's too big. It's too long an effort. It takes a great deal of planning. You just can't assume that everything will just take care of itself and that all support services will automatically shift into the proper gear at the right time.

This is a team effort involving everyone, because everyone is going to make the homeport shift. The ship moves, the crew moves, and the families move. Everyone has to pitch in and no one can act as if this isn't important.

Communications are absolutely essential. This is critical! You need to establish a good method for making sure that information gets passed up and down the chain. Make sure things are happening according to the plan and that you're getting timely information that will help you avert problems.

The homeport shift doesn't stop the day you get there. Whether or not you're in a shipyard or a homeport, you still must continue to "sell" the ship as the place to be for your crew because they trust the chain of command. The command seeks to know their needs and does all it can to take care of its crew members and families.

The best definition I've heard about a successful homeport shift is one that doesn't result in any "congressionals." The REEVES met this criteria. About 25% of our crew shipped over even though we were in the shipyard. More than 105 sailors reenlisted that following year which meant they must have wanted to be on-board this particular ship. I attribute this to superior performance on the part of everyone in the chain of command. The homeport shift was a job to do. It had to happen and the whole crew made it happen.

**APPENDIX C**  
**ASSESSMENT OF HOMEPORT TRANSFER KIT**

**HOMEPORT TRANSFER KIT ASSESSMENT**

Upon completion of the homeport transfer, please complete this form and submit it to the Commanding Officer.

1. Overall relevance of the kit to the homeport transfer process:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not at all \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly \_\_\_\_\_ Completely
2. Useability of this kit:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Not at all \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_ Mostly \_\_\_\_\_ Completely
3. Most helpful parts of this kit were:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Least helpful parts of this kit were:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
5. Recommended changes:  
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6. General comments:  
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